THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) Governmen attaches special importance to the growth of export of agricultural commodities including tobacco. Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of tobacco and tobacco products include, inter-alia, re-orientation of production of tobacco to meet changing international needs, enhancement of quality and productivity levels, monitoring and strict control of pesticides residues, aligning grading to international grading standards and permitting imports for product development.

Coffee growing potential in the Country

5118. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a significant coffee growing potential in the country, beyond the traditional areas;

(b) whether the Coffee Board has renewed efforts to contact State Government like the Government of Andhra Prodesh to increase coffee cultivation; and

(c) detatils of any fresh initiactive taken by Coffee Board to expand area of coffee cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Coffee Board has been pursuing with various State Govts. to increase the area under coffee in their respective States. The Government of Andhra Pradesh was approached in 1976-77 in this regard. A target of 16,000 hec. expansion programme was envisaged for Andhra Pradesh and a total area of 10,404 hec has been brought under coffee plantation till date.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Coffee Board to expand coffee cultivation in the country:—

(1) The Board has conducted a detailed INSITU surveys to identify suitable areas for coffee plantation in the non-traditional States.

(2) The Board has set up Research and Extension Centre and Coffee Demonstration Farm to support coffee cultivation programme.

(3) Coffee Board extends required support and information for formulation of coffee projects and marketing in the States.

(4) The extension wing of the Board organises visits to coffee growing areas to give advice and help to the coffee cultivators.

(5) Coffee Board also monitors with the State Governments the progress of coffee cultivation in their states.

Alternative Scheme for IPRS

5119. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering an alternative scheme to the International Price Replenishment Scheme (IPRS);

(b) if so, the Broad features of the alternative scheme;

(c) whether Government have at any stage made an assessment of the working of the existing IPRS; if so, its outcome and what were the flaws noticed as a result thereof; and

(d) how far it helped in controlling the price fluctuation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A new Scheme called the Engineering Products Export (Replenishment of Iron and Steel